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# A Boy Goes into the World

Jane Kenyon

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On the way back to Beijing  
our embassy car rushed wildly  
through a succession of hamlets, forcing  
bicycles off the road, dooryard  
fowl to flap and fluster, and from  
grandmother, bundled in her blue jacket  
to take the pale sun, such a look!

Tired? Tired was not the word.  
Getting sleepy in the warm car  
I considered the Wall, the scale  
of enterprise. A lock of hair had fallen  
across my eyes. At last my brain  
convinced my hand to move it.

That night I was honored by a banquet  
in a room so cold I could see my breath.

### A BOY GOES INTO THE WORLD

My brother rode off on his bike  
into the summer afternoon, but  
mother called me back  
from the end of the drive:  
“It’s different for girls.”  
How that stung!

He’d be gone for hours, come back  
with things: a cocoon, gray-brown  
and papery around a stick;  
a puff ball, ripe, wrinkled,  
and exuding spores; owl pellets—  
bits of undigested bone and fur;  
and pieces of moss that might  
have made toupees for preposterous  
green men, but went instead  
into a wide-necked jar for a terrarium.

He mounted his plunder on poster  
board, gluing and naming  
each piece. He has long since  
forgotten those days and things, but  
I, at last, can claim them as my own.